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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

It was 161 years ago today that President Andrew Jackson gave a clarion call to prayer in his farewell address. Jackson's words challenge us: "You have the highest of human trusts committed to your care. Providence has showered on this favored land blessings without number, and has chosen you as the guardians of freedom to preserve it for the benefit of the human race. May He who holds in His hands the destinies of nations, make you worthy of the favors He has bestowed and enable you, with pure hearts and hands and sleepless vigilance, to guard and defend, to the end of time, the great charge He has committed to your keeping."

Let us pray.

Almighty God, as the sword of these piercing words hangs over this Senate chamber today, provide the Senators with a renewed sense of awe and wonder over the awesome challenge You have entrusted to them. Thank You for the abundant courage You provide leaders who seek first and foremost to know and do Your will. Through our Lord and Savior. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The able majority leader, Senator LOTT of Mississippi, is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, the Senate will resume consideration now of S. 1173, the ISTEA surface transportation reauthorization legislation. As under the consent agreement, the Senate will conclude 1 hour of debate on the

DeWine-Lautenberg amendment regarding alcohol levels, with a vote occurring on or in relation to the DeWine-Lautenberg amendment at approximately 10:30 this morning. Following that vote, it's hoped that the Senate will be able to debate an amendment dealing with funding levels. In addition, this afternoon the Senate will hopefully debate an amendment to be offered by Senator McConnell. Therefore, Members should be prepared for votes throughout today's session.

As a reminder to all Senators, the first rolcall vote today will occur at 10:30 a.m.

I urge the Senate to work hard to make progress today. If we can have this debate and vote at 10:30 and go to the funding level resolution and hopefully find a way to complete that today and move on to the McConnell amendment and hopefully get to a vote on that, a great deal can be accomplished today and we can move the bill along considerably.

Mr. President, I would like to yield myself leader time so that I may comment on the Lautenberg amendment briefly.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

THE LAUTENBERG-DEWINE AMENDMENT REGARDING BLOOD-ALCOHOL LEVELS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, as I understand the amendment, it would require States to enact the .08 alcohol content legislation instead of the present, I think, .10 level of alcohol to be considered drunk. That has to be done by September 30, 2000. Noncompliant States would lose 5 percent of highway funding on October 1, 2000, and then 10 percent thereafter. Currently, 15 States already have the .08 level of alcohol content to be considered drunk in drunk driving cases.

Mr. President, I think we should encourage people not to drink. We should encourage all people not to drink excessively. We should do all that we can to get the States to pass the lower level of .08. I support that. We need to combat the problem of drunken driving.

I understand the tragedy and the ravages of people that drink and drive. My father was killed in just such an accident. So this is not an issue that I take lightly. But I will oppose this amendment. This is a typical Federal Government attitude—not to encourage you to do right, not to say if you do the right thing, there will be incentives in it for you; no; you do it our way, or we will punish you; you will lose funds if you don't do it the way we say. Some people say President Reagan did the same thing. Yes, and I opposed it then, too.

I am very much opposed to alcoholism and drinking and driving. But for us to stand here and pontificate about how you must do it our way, that this is the solution, or we are going to take your funds away, what about poor States like mine where people are killed every week because of bad roads, potholes in the roads, dangerous bridges? What about safety? If a State, for whatever reason, by mistake or obviously for the wrong reasons, doesn't do it, we take a big chunk of money away from them. Is that going to save lives? No. As a matter of fact, it may lead to more lives being lost.

So while I know this is well-intentioned, and while I support the intent or the goals of this legislation, the idea that we are going to punish States because you don't do it our way I think is the wrong thing to be doing. I hope my colleagues will think about this very, very seriously before they cast a vote in favor of this amendment.

Mr. THURMOND. Will the able Senator yield?

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I yield to the Senator from South Carolina.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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